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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, US

SUBJECT: GARBA VISIT TO WASHINGTON FEBRUARY 3 - 5

SUMMARY: DURING TWO-DAY VISIT, FEBRUARY 3 - 5, GARBA SAW MEMBERS OF NIGERIAN COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON, LUNCHEON ON CAPITOL HILL, AND HAD PRIVATE MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. ON BALANCE, VISIT CONTRIBUTED VERY POSITIVELY TO IMPROVEMENT OF US-NIGERIAN RELATIONS, BUT GARBA'S REMARKS TO PRESS CREATED MISIMPRESSION THAT USG CHANGING ITS POLICY ON ANGOLA. END SUMMARY.

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1. GARBA ARRIVED LATE AFTERNOON FEBRUARY 3 FROM NEW YORK

AND DEPARTED EVENING FEBRUARY 5 FOR LONDON. MOST OF HIS TIME SPENT WITH NIGERIAN COMMUNITY, INCLUDING EMBASSY OFFICERS AND STUDENTS. IN CALLS ON DEPARTMENT, HIS RETINUE INCLUDED E. O. OGUNSILERE, DIRECTOR OF MEA AFRICA DEPT., OLUYEMI ADENIJI, DIRECTOR OF MEA INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPT., AMBASSADOR SANU, AND MINISTER EMMANUEL OBE.

2. FEBRUARY 5 MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY AND FOLLOW-ON MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFEELE DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO ANGOLA. GARBA SUGGESTED THAT US OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH MPLA WHICH NOW QUOTE DE FACTO MEMBER OF OAU UNQUOTE. THE SECRETARY SAID US HAS NOTHING AGAINST MPLA THOUGH WE QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL OF AFRICA OF PRECEDENT OF MASSIVE SOVIET AND CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. GARBA COMMENTED THAT US SHOULD SHOW MPLA AN ALTERNATIVE TO TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON SOVIETS/CUBANS, AND EVEN ENCOURAGE GULF AND OTHER US FIRMS TO DO BUSINESS IN ANGOLA.

3. IN FOLLOW-ON MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFEELE, GARBA ASKED IF US MERCENARIES BEING RECRUITED FOR COMBAT IN ANGOLA. SCHAUFEELE ASSURED HIM THAT AS FAR AS USG AWARE AMERICANS WERE NOT, AND THAT SUCH RECRUITING ILLEGAL IN US. GARBA STATED THAT AS CONSEQUENCE MPLA MEMBERSHIP IN OAU, FMG CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE ISOLATION, PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL, OF ZAIRE. OGUNSILERE SAID THAT AFRICANS NOT FEARFUL OF PERMANENT SOVIET OR CUBAN INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA, AS US APPARENTLY IS, AND PRESSED FOR EVIDENCE THAT SOVIETS AND CUBANS PLAN TO STAY IN ANGOLA QUOTE FOREVER UNQUOTE OR PLAN TO SPILL OVER INTO NEIGHBORING STATES. GARBA REITERATED HIS REQUEST THAT US ENCOURAGE GULF AND OTHER FIRMS TO DO BUSINESS IN ANGOLA.

4. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING VISIT TO DEPARTMENT, GARBA MET WITH A FEW INVITED MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AT NIGERIAN EMBASSY. ACCORDING TO THREE USIA OFFICERS WHO ATTENDED THE HOUR-LONG SESSION, GARBA WAS RELAXED AND WITTY, WAS CONCILIATORY IN EVERYTHING HE SAID, AND WAS OBVIOUSLY

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STRIVING TO COMMUNICATE THAT NIGERIA WANTS GOOD RELATIONS WITH US AND BELIEVES PRESENT RELATIONS ARE GOOD. IN GARBA'S WORDS, US-NIGERIAN RELATIONSHIP IS VERY GOOD (SOME HEARD HIM SAY PERFECT), AND THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE GONE AS WIDE APART AS THEY CAN OVER ANGOLA AND ARE NOW COMING CLOSER.

5. GARBA ALSO MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO NEWS CONFERENCE:

(A) THE SECRETARY HAD ASSURED HIM THAT USG HAS NOTHING AGAINST MPLA, AND WHEN TIME COMES, IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO CHANGE OR SHIFT US POLICY. (B) FMG IS PREPARED TO HELP MPLA IN MANY WAYS; TROOPS ARE NEITHER NECESSARY NOR DESIRABLE, AND FMG NOT SENDING SOPHISTICATED MILITARY HARDWARE, BUT FMG WON'T REFUSE MPLA REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT. (C) US POLICY ON AFRICA IS VERY NEGATIVE OR NON-EXISTENT WHICH IS WHY SECRETARY KISSINGER IS VISITING AFRICA QUOTE IN NEAR FUTURE UNQUOTE. (D) FMG QUOTE NATURALLY VERY UPSET UNQUOTE BY FORD LETTER BECAUSE UNSIGNED AND TELEGRAPHIC CIRCULAR IS WRONG WAY FOR ONE HEAD OF STATE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANOTHER, BUT LETTER (WHICH GARBA SAID HE THOUGHT THE SECRETARY HADN'T EVEN KNOWN ABOUT) AND ITS REPERCUSSION IN NIGERIA HAVE SINCE

LOST THEIR IMPACT. (E) FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS WILL AGAIN BE ALLOWED TO ENTER NIGERIA (SEE SEPTTEL). (F) SOME NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN US HAVE BEEN UNNECESSARILY HARRASSED BY US AUTHORITIES. TAPE OF COMPLETE NEWS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN POUCHED TO EMBASSY BY USIA.

6. GARBA MET ABOUT TEN MEMBERS OF THE BLACK CAUCUS, ROUGHLY SAME NUMBER OF OTHER CONGRESSMEN AND MRS. CORETTA KING AT LUNCHEON FEBRUARY 4 GIVEN BY CONGRESSMAN ANDREW YOUNG. YOUNG TOLD VOA CORRESPONDENT THAT GARBA VERY ARTICULATE IN EXPLAINING NIGERIA'S CONCEPT OF A QUOTE TOTALLY INDEPENDENT AFRICA UNQUOTE. ACCORDING TO YOUNG, THE CONGRESSMEN ASKED GARBA ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LONG-RUN SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA AND ABOUT THE UNITA FACTION. YOUNG TOLD VOA THAT UNITA QUESTION IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE, IN HIS OPINION, AFRICA WILL RISE OR FALL DEPENDING ON HOW IT OBSERVES MINORITY RIGHTS. GARBA MET SEPARATELY WITH SENATOR DICK
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CLARK, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA.

7. DURING THEIR MEETING, GARBA AND THE SECRETARY BRIEFLY DISCUSSED LATTER'S POSSIBLE VISIT TO NIGERIA IN MARCH OR APRIL. GARBA WAS VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROSPECT OF VISIT AND PROMISED THE SECRETARY THAT HE WOULD MEET ALL RPT ALL OF THE TOP NIGERIAN LEADERS. IN LATER CONVERSATION WITH AF/W OFFICERS, GARBA AND AMBASSADOR SANU SAID SECRETARY COULD BE SPARED HARDSHIPS OF LAGOS TRAFFIC BY BEING HELICOPTERED FROM AIRPORT DIRECTLY TO FEDERAL PALACE HOTEL OR DODAN BARRACKS. THEY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SECRETARY WOULD SPEAK WHILE IN NIGERIA, PERHAPS AT DINNER, AT A UNIVERSITY, OR DURING SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZED BY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. THEY PLEADED THAT SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE SHOULD PERMIT VISIT OF THREE DAYS

OR MORE AND THAT HE SHOULD VISIT AT LEAST ONE OTHER PART OF NIGERIA IN ADDITION TO LAGOS.

8. COMMENT: ON BALANCE, GARBA'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON CONTRIBUTED VERY POSITIVELY TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF US-NIGERIAN RELATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, GARBA OPENED HIMSELF UP DURING PRESS CONFERENCE AND, BY REPEATING THE SECRETARY'S ASSURANCE THAT THE USG HAS NOTHING AGAINST THE MPLA PER SE AND COULD ACCEPT MPLA (LIKE FRELIMO) WHEN THE TIME COMES, GAVE WASHINGTON POST REPORTER KAREN DE YOUNG SLIM BASIS FOR CONCLUDING THAT SECRETARY IS PRESENTLY CONSIDERING SHIFT OF US POLICY ON ANGOLA. STATE 030983 WAS INTENDED TO CORRECT MISIMPRESSION OF WASHINGTON POST ACCOUNT AND WAS NOT INTENDED JUDGE WHETHER WASHINGTON POST ACCURATELY QUOTED GARBA OR WHETHER GARBA ACCURATELY QUOTED THE SECRETARY.

9. FOR OTTAWA: YOU MAY DRAW ON FOREGOING (EXCEPT PARA 7) IN CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOC. OTHER MESSAGES BEING REPEATED TO YOU IN ACCORDANCE WITH OTTAWA 0536.

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